

Published and Copyright (c) 1999 - 2008
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

To subscribe to A-ONE, change e-mail addresses, or unsubscribe,
log on to our website at: www.atarinews.org
and click on "Subscriptions".
OR subscribe to A-ONE by sending a message to: dpj@atarinews.org
and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to
subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the
following sites:

<http://people.delphiforums.com/dpj/a-one.htm>
Now available:
<http://www.atarinews.org>

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
<http://forums.delphiforums.com/atari/>

=~::~~::~=

~ COPA Struck Down, Again	~ People Are Talking!	~ Yahoo's New Zimbra!
~ Spam King Escapes Camp!	~ 1 Trillion Web URLs!	~ DNS Attack Code!
~ New NY Labeling Laws!	~ Web-Tracking Rules?	~ New Lexmark Inkjets!

~ MS: "Done" With Yahoo! ~ Epilepsy Tests Fail! ~ Caution With Old PCs

-* Yahoo Compromise With Icahn! *-
-* Escaped Spam King Kills Family, Self *-
-* New York May Sue Comcast Over Net Kid Porn *-

=~==~==

->From the Editor's Keyboard
"*****"

"Saying it like it is!"

What a week it was! Thunderstorms all week, tornadoes in the region two days in a row, and finally - sun! It could only happen in New England! I could have stocked trout in the back yard for most of one day - the rains were torrential. Even our two dogs were smart enough to not want to go out in that stuff, fortunately!

Somehow, I managed to get the last of my "pressing" outdoor projects finished during periods of sun/clouds. Still a few more things to do, but they tend to be the "whenever you get to them" variety!

So, what's up with national politics lately? This is almost as good as watching the Comedy Channel. I wish that I could keep up with all of the various "skits" seen on television! And things haven't even gotten serious yet!

So, while I try to take all of this in, and everything else going around these days, feel free to dive into this week's issue and enjoy the more "normal" things in the world today!

Until next time...

=~==~==

PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, this past week hasn't been a watershed for messages either, and the combined total for this week and last is a whopping 25 messages. There just isn't a lot happening out there right now. So there aren't going to be any threads in this column, but there's no way I can justify not having a column in the mag for two weeks in a row, so you're going to have to put up with my ranting and rumbling about whatever hits the couple of neurons I've got left in my tiny little brain.

So I'm just going to sit back and have a snort or two of some really

cheap Italian wine (the kind my grandfather used to keep in the gallon jug under the sink) and let my mind free-associate. See if you can keep up. Ready, set, GO!

Soooo... what are we going to talk about? Politics? Both sides are ticking me off with their simple-minded finger-pointing. Someone wake me when they decide to tell us what they stand for instead of why the other guy sucks, okay?

The economy? We're in a recession. Period. Fuel and transportation costs are boosting the cost of everything else, and salaries are staying fairly flat. Same money in / more money out... does that sound like a recipe for a GOOD economy? I didn't think so.

The mortgage crisis? Screw 'em all. Let the money-grubbing bastards die the slow, painful deaths they deserve. The lenders who shoveled these sub-prime, no-money-down, balloon payment loans toward people who wanted a much more expensive house than they could afford but hadn't had the foresight to put any money away for a down-payment should be drawn and quartered or pilloried. And the dribbling idiots who were buying these houses and thought that they'd found some sort of loophole in the lending system that people have been missing since the time of the pharaohs don't deserve to keep their houses. As my grandfather used to say: Ya can't reward stupid.

Alright, how 'bout we take a whack at celebrities? Brad and Angelina, Tom and Katy, Brittany and K-Fed (since their divorce known as Fed-Ex [grin]), Paris or Nicole and whatever 'mimbo' they happen to be sighted with really don't interest me. I'd much prefer to hear about the paparazzi swarming over the campuses of Cal-Tech and MIT to show us what genius looks like. Maybe then some of our politicians will start to be able to recognize it again.

Heh heh... MIT and Cal-Tech. That reminds me of this new sitcom on television. Have you seen the show called THE BIG BANG THEORY? Oh, it's funny! While I'm afraid that it does perpetuate some stereotypes about smart people in general and geniuses in particular, it's still funny... and they DO have the token average blond in the mix just for giggles.

Perhaps my favorite part of the show is the theme song. It was recorded by Barenaked Ladies (am I the only one here who got suckered in by that name?) and is really quite amusing. You can find the song on YouTube... and they've even got a "full version" for your amusement. If you know what an autotroph and Pangaea is, and find it funny that the dinosaurs died because they "froze their asses off", then you'll like the full version even more. Oh, here are the words to the song... if you find it amusing, go to YouTube and check it out. I'm betting that you're going to listen to it AT LEAST a couple of times.

THE HISTORY OF EVERYTHING

Our whole universe was in a hot dense state
Then nearly 14 billion years ago expansion started...
WAIT!

The Earth began to cool, the autotrophs began to drool
Neanderthals developed tools, We built a wall, we built the pyramids
Math, science, history, unraveling the mystery
That all started with the Big Bang

BANG!

Since the dawn of Man is really not that long
As every galaxy was formed in less time than it takes to sing this song
A fraction of a second and the elements were made
The bipeds stood up straight, the dinosaurs all met their fate
They tried to leap but they were late and they all died
(they froze their asses off)
The oceans and Pangaea, see ya, wouldn't want to be ya,
Set in motion by the Big Bang
It all started with the big... BANG
It's expanding ever outward but one day
It will cause the stars to go the other way
(Collapsing ever inward, we won't be here, it won't be heard)
Our best and brightest figure that it'll make an even bigger bang
Australopithecus would really have been sick of us
Debating how we're here, There catching deer, we're catching viruses
Religion or astronomy, Encarta, Deuteronomy
It all started with the Big Bang
Music and mythology, Einstein and astrology
It all started with the Big Bang
It all started with a big....
BANG

Now isn't that cute? It's scientifically inaccurate in several spots,
I'll admit, but YOU try fitting the words 'nucleosynthesis' and entropy
into the same song. [grin]

That brings me to the next topic: The stuff you can find on the
internet. I don't think there's anything you can think of that you
can't find on the internet. If, by some miracle, you CAN think of
something that's nowhere to be found on the 'net, than put it up there,
and you'll make a million dollars.

And speaking of finding things on the internet, that's where I've been
job hunting for the past... ummm... large block of months. I haven't
had a lot of luck, but I keep looking anyway. I've become quite
disillusioned with employment services and the so-called headhunters,
but never more so than yesterday, when I got a call from a headhunter.
It's my usual modus operandi to let the answering machine take these
calls, so that I can do a little bit of research before I actually
speak with them. This guy takes the cake. He calls me because he saw my
resume online and noticed that I'd worked for the Torrey S. Crane
company for decades. He tells the answering machine that he's currently
looking for mechanics and maintenance engineers for cranes, and
believes that I might be able to help him find bodies to fill the
positions. Not that I might be interested in a job, mind you, but that
I might be able to help _HIM_ out. Can you imagine?

I scratched my head for a moment, then found his email address (I've got
some mean private-cyber-investigator-type skills). I emailed him and
pointed out that the Torrey S. Crane company was named for the
company's founder, and was a manufacturer of solder and solder-related
products, and that actual cranes, either mechanical or avian, were not
involved. I mentioned that the middle initial "S." should have been a
dead giveaway as to the genesis of the company name, and that I didn't
see any incentive for me to help him in his search even if I HAD been
able to help, but that if he would like to set up a seminar for his
company, I would be willing to teach a short course in vocabulary,
comprehension and information retention.

Oddly enough, I haven't heard back from him. [grin]

Well folks, there really REALLY aren't enough messages to make a decent column, so I'd appreciate it if you could scroll back up and sing the Big Bang Theory theme to yourself at least once. I dare you to try to keep from smiling as you read over the words... I DARE you!

C'mon back next week, same time, same station, and if there are enough messages to make a column worthwhile, we'll dive right in. If not?... Hmmm... I'll have to get another jug of wine.

'Till next week, keep your ears open so you'll hear what they're saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$
[illegible]
$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
 ~~~~~

## Microsoft Turns to Users for New Wave of Xbox Games

Microsoft Corp will turn to users of its Xbox 360 to create new video games and broaden the types of games available on its console, taking a page out of the strategy books of Facebook and YouTube.

The world's largest software maker said on Tuesday that it will start selling "user-generated" games later this year on its online Xbox Live service and share up to 70 percent of revenue with the game developer.

Microsoft began offering game production tools in 2006 to amateurs and hobbyists under an initiative called "XNA," which allowed developers to create a game that could run on the Xbox, a Windows-based computer or its Zune media player.

User-created content is the backbone of many advertising-supported Web sites such as Facebook and YouTube, but the video game industry has relied mostly on deep-pocketed developers to create sequels or games based on licensed properties.

Facebook and YouTube provide a forum for new software applications and

videos for free, but they do not share advertising fees with users.

Microsoft, however, requires the prospective video game developer to buy a \$99-a-year premium membership to the XNA Creators Club, but offers a slice of the revenue.

The games will be sold on the Xbox Live Marketplace at three different prices - the equivalent of \$2.50, \$5 or \$10 - using Microsoft points.

In order to get the game into the Xbox Live store, the games must pass a peer-review system.

"Not only are we democratizing game development with Xbox Live Community Games later this year, but we're creating an opportunity for aspiring developers," Chris Satchell, chief technology officer at Microsoft's Interactive Entertainment Business group, said in a news release.

Microsoft expects the games created by users will double the number of games available for the Xbox 360 when the Community Games section of its Xbox Live online store comes out of "beta," or test, mode in the fall.

### PS3 Wipeout Failing Epilepsy Tests

Dying to get your hands on Wipeout HD? First, Sony needs to make sure that the high-speed racing game doesn't put people into epileptic seizures, says one report.

CVG is reporting that Wipeout HD, a futuristic racing game that moves at a fast clip and features lots of shiny neon decorations, "fails the epilepsy tests so much that it has to be re-engineered."

When the anticipated downloadable PlayStation 3 was a no-show at last week's E3, Sony Europe President and CEO David Reeves explained that the game was experiencing "really tricky technical problems," without going into more detail.

Just how extensive a re-working this means is unclear, but Reeves would only say that he "thinks" the game will be out by year's end.

### New York State Passes Video Game Labeling Law

Video games sold in New York state must clearly label ratings for violent content under a law signed on Tuesday, which rights groups criticized as likely unconstitutional.

The New York Civil Liberties Union said that it planned to mount a legal challenge against the law, signed on Tuesday by New York Gov. David Paterson, as it raised free speech concerns.

The group said that similar laws in California, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota and Washington state have been thrown out as unconstitutional.

The U.S. video gaming industry submits to ratings on a voluntary basis, and the system is similar to movie ratings.

The new law says that is it compulsory for games that are already rated to be labeled and also requires that new video game consoles are installed with parent-controlled lockout features by 2010.

"This legislation will provide information and educate consumers to help them make better choices for their children," said state Sen. Andrew Lanza, a bill sponsor.

Robert Perry, the NYCLU's legislative director, said the new law was a "back-door" way of regulating video game content.

The law also establishes an advisory council to study "the connection between interactive media and real-life violence in minors exposed to such media" and to evaluate the ratings issued by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board.

=~::~~==

A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Yahoo Settles with Icahn To Avert August Showdown

Yahoo Inc. averted a showdown with rabble-rousing investor Carl Icahn on Monday by giving him three seats on its board of directors in a truce that still leaves the door open for a possible sale to Microsoft Corp.

The compromise spares Yahoo from more bickering with Icahn, an acerbic billionaire who had spent the past two months spearheading a rebellion to replace the Internet company's entire board in retaliation for its rejection of Microsoft's \$47.5 billion takeover bid in May.

The duel had been scheduled to culminate in a shareholder vote at Yahoo's Aug. 1 annual meeting.

It now appears there will be fewer fireworks at that gathering, although some Yahoo shareholders are still expected to vent about the board's inability to get a deal done with Microsoft after six months of wrangling.

The main order of business will be the cease-fire giving Icahn three of the 11 seats on Yahoo's board, which will be expanded to make the deal possible.

Eight of Yahoo's current nine directors will be retained, leaving the company's current regime - headed by Chairman Roy Bostock and Chief Executive Jerry Yang - in the driver's seat.

Robert Kotick, the CEO of video game maker Activision Blizzard Inc. and a Yahoo director for five years, will surrender his seat as part of the agreement.

But the compromise, negotiated over the weekend, doesn't necessarily settle Yahoo's fate, which has been unclear since Microsoft made its first unsolicited offer in January.

Icahn, who owns a 5 percent stake in Yahoo, emphasized he still believes a sale of all or part of Yahoo may still be the best way for the Sunnyvale, Calif.-based company to lift its sagging stock price.

And with more than \$1.5 billion invested in Yahoo, Icahn isn't likely to be satisfied with the status quo. He paid an average of about \$25 per share for his Yahoo holdings, meaning he will sustain a loss unless the company's stock perks up.

Yahoo shares fell 78 cents Monday to finish at \$21.67 - well below the \$33 a share that Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer dangled in early May before withdrawing the bid after Yang sought \$37 per share.

Icahn's involvement on corporate boards hasn't always paid off. For instance, he won three board seats at Blockbuster Inc. in May 2005 and, since then, the movie rental chain's stock price has plunged by about 75 percent.

Microsoft didn't respond to requests for comment Monday, but has previously indicated it remains interested in exploring a deal with Yahoo, especially if the negotiations were handled by a new board.

Having been repeatedly rebuffed by Yahoo so far, Microsoft has been reported to be discussing a possible acquisition of Time Warner Inc.'s AOL. Microsoft wants to strengthen its Internet business to challenge Google Inc.'s dominance of the online search and advertising market.

Standard and Poor's Internet analyst Scott Kessler doubts Microsoft will buy Yahoo, but interpreted the Icahn agreement as a sign that the current board realizes it needs to shake things up even more than Yang has already done since he became CEO 13 months ago.

"It makes it more clear to shareholders that Yahoo's board is amenable to new ideas and is willing to do what's necessary to get the business back on track," Kessler said.

Some shareholders still want more even more new faces on Yahoo's board after watching the company's market value plummet by more than 40 percent, or about \$20 billion, since the end of 2005. All but one of Yahoo's directors - Maggie Wilderotter - have been on the board since 2005.

"I am still very angry at this board and I am sure other shareholders feel the same way," said Eric Jackson, who manages a hedge fund, Ironfire Capital, that's organizing a protest on behalf of about 150 Yahoo stockholders with about 3.2 million combined shares.

Jackson said his group plans to punctuate its displeasure by opposing the re-election of four Yahoo incumbents - Bostock, Ronald Burkle, Eric Hippeau and Arthur Kern. More than 30 percent of Yahoo's shareholders voted against Bostock, Burkle and Kern at last year's annual meeting, with Jackson leading the fight.

The shareholder angst could intensify if Yahoo's second-quarter earnings, due Tuesday, disappoint Wall Street. Analysts are bracing for



a letdown after Google and Microsoft indicated last week that the deteriorating economy is hurting the online ad market.

After spending weeks ridiculing Yang and the rest of Yahoo's board, Icahn apparently realized he had little hope of gaining control of the company.

Things began to unravel July 12 when Yahoo rejected Microsoft's latest proposal to buy its online search operations in a complex deal assembled in concert with Icahn.

Then, on Friday, Legg Mason Capital Management Inc. became the first major Yahoo shareholder to publicly declare its support for the incumbent board. Legg Mason, which controls 4.4 percent of Yahoo shares, also encouraged Yahoo and Icahn to negotiate a compromise.

Yahoo's new board may include a possible successor to Yang, whom Icahn had threatened to fire if his attempted coup had been successful.

Besides taking a board seat himself, Icahn will be able to recommend two other directors who must also be accepted by Yahoo's nominating committee.

To fill those spots, Icahn will choose from the eight men he had already nominated and one new candidate - Jonathan Miller, the former CEO of Yahoo rival AOL. Miller is the kind of seasoned CEO that Icahn envisioned for Yahoo.

But throwing Miller into the mix of Yahoo's new directors was Yang's idea, according to a person familiar with the discussions who asked not to be identified because the talks were considered confidential.

While sparring with Icahn and Microsoft, Yang had also been talking to Miller - a partner at the technology investment firm Velocity Interactive Group - and decided he would be a valuable addition to the board, this person said.

Icahn didn't return a call seeking comment Monday.

Yang, who co-founded Yahoo at Stanford University in 1994, has been trying to steer a turnaround. He believes Yahoo can dramatically accelerate its revenue growth in the next two years by extending the reach of its ad network and relying on Google's superior technology to sell some ads for Yahoo's site.

Icahn seems unlikely to back off his criticism of Yang, Kessler said, although his misgivings may now be expressed more privately.

Darren Chervitz, who co-manages a fund that owns about 75,000 Yahoo shares, predicted Yang will be out as CEO by the end of this year. If Microsoft doesn't buy Yahoo, he expects Icahn to renew his call for Yang's ouster.

"Yang is a reasonably smart person, but it wasn't until Microsoft entered the picture that he really started to make some changes," said Chervitz, who helps runs the Jacob Internet Fund. "I don't think this is the right team to lead Yahoo. I don't have a lot of faith in it."

## Microsoft CEO Backs Web Spending, "Done" with Yahoo

Chief Executive Steve Ballmer on Thursday defended Microsoft Corp's need to make heavy investments in its Internet businesses but said the company was "done," for now, with pursuing Yahoo Inc.

"There's nothing under discussion between the two of us," Ballmer told investors of how six months of various talks had reached an impasse earlier in July.

"We had a set of principles, we talked about them, it didn't work out," he said. "Fine, we're done. We can move on."

The message for Microsoft's annual meeting with Wall Street analysts, an all-day affair at its headquarters in Redmond, Washington, was that it had a post-Yahoo plan to turn around its online services division and a strategy to take advantage of future opportunities, even as its Internet chief departs.

"There is this huge, huge, huge new opportunity around the Internet and online and we have to embrace that opportunity and invest in that opportunity," Ballmer said.

Shares of Microsoft have fallen 8 percent over the last week since the company forecast an outlook below Wall Street estimates and revealed an additional \$500 million investment into its online unit, even as it chalked up further losses.

Charles Di Bona, a software research analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein, said Ballmer's comments did not give enough details about how that additional investment will be spent and how the company arrived at that decision.

"It's spending \$500 million dollars and then it says we'll tell you later how we'll spend it," said Di Bona, who has an "outperform" rating on Microsoft. "The market's concern is not about how it is running its core business. It's about decisions about larger chunks of money that people can't track."

Microsoft's online division has posted eight straight quarters of losses. It lost \$1.23 billion in the past fiscal year, twice as much as it had lost in fiscal 2007. Ballmer said given the opportunity, the losses represent an investment for a potential windfall.

Ballmer said its online businesses could eventually account for most of the economic value created by the world's largest software maker.

The Microsoft CEO was left to describe Internet strategy after Microsoft announced one day before the analyst meeting that the head of that business, Kevin Johnson, was leaving. He will become chief executive of Juniper Networks Inc.

"We thought it was important whoever was going to get up and talk about the big investment online was going to be here in three weeks and so you're stuck with me on this topic today," Ballmer said.

Seeking to show momentum in its existing Internet business, Microsoft announced that it had expanded its existing pact with Facebook, the world's largest social networking site, to provide Web search and search

advertising in addition to its existing deal to run graphical display ads on Facebook pages.

Satya Nadella, Microsoft's senior vice president in its search and advertising group, said the expanded Facebook deal would be implemented in the next few months and "carry both our Web results, as well as our page search advertising."

Microsoft said the new search advertising deal will be limited to Facebook's U.S. pages. The pact builds on a deal in which Microsoft invested \$240 million last October in Facebook for a 1.6 percent stake, valuing the company at \$15 billion.

Ballmer said its pursuit of Yahoo reflected the importance of Web search as the starting point for consumers to locate a growing range of digital media and e-commerce services from online video to shopping, which he estimated represented a \$1 trillion business opportunity.

Ballmer described Yahoo, the world's second-largest provider of Web search and related advertising, as a quick way for Microsoft, a distant No. 3 player, to gain scale in order to compete more effectively with leader Google Inc.

"A lot of our discussion around Yahoo centers as much on this issue as any other issue," he said, adding later: "This is a two-horse race. It is about Microsoft and Google."

The Yahoo-Microsoft combination made sense because of cost savings to be gained from merging research and development and data center investment, Ballmer said, but added that the deal fell apart over price and possible regulatory approval delays.

"At the wrong price and if it had to stretch out over two administrations of review ... it was not a good tactic," said Ballmer. "Does that mean nobody will ever talk to anybody again? I suspect the answer is also no," he said.

Microsoft believed it had to seal a Yahoo deal by early May in order to win approval for it from U.S. regulators before a new administration takes over in Washington. Yahoo rejected a \$47.5 billion bid by Microsoft at the time.

#### US Court Strikes Down COPA, Again

A U.S. appeals court has for the third time struck down a law intended to keep Web sites with sexually oriented themes away from children, with judges saying the law is a vague and overly broad attack on free speech.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit, in a ruling released Tuesday, struck down the Child Online Protection Act (COPA), a law passed by Congress in 1998. COPA required that all Web sites containing "material harmful to minors," including pictures, recordings and writing, restrict access based on age.

COPA defined material harmful to minors as something the "average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find... is designed to appeal to, or is designed to pander to, the prurient

interest." People who posted adult content without blocking minors' access could face up to six months in prison under the law.

COPA appears to violate the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protecting free speech, and the U.S. government hasn't made its case that the law is necessary, 3rd Circuit judges wrote. "COPA criminalizes a category of speech - 'harmful to minors' material - that is constitutionally protected for adults," the judges wrote.

Opponents of the law, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Nerve.com, Salon.com, the Urban Dictionary and the Sexual Health Network, argued the law amounted to government censorship and was so broad that it would affect many Web sites, including those that included information on sexually transmitted diseases.

"For years the government has been trying to thwart freedom of speech on the Internet, and for years the courts have been finding the attempts unconstitutional," Chris Hansen, senior staff attorney with the ACLU First Amendment Working Group, said in a statement. "The government has no more right to censor the Internet than it does books and magazines."

Opponents of COPA have successfully challenged it in court several times. In 2000, the 3rd Circuit upheld a lower court's injunction against the implementation of the law, and in 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the injunction but sent the law back to U.S. district court. In 2003, the 3rd Circuit ruled that the law violated the U.S. Constitution.

In 2004, the U.S. Supreme Court again looked at COPA, and it again sent the case back to district court, this time to determine whether there had been any changes in technology that affect the implementation of the law, such as whether commercial blocking software was as effective as the banned law might be.

In March 2007, a district judge once again struck down COPA, and the U.S. Department of Justice again appealed, leading to the 3rd Circuit's ruling Tuesday.

The Supreme Court in 1997 struck down a similar law, called Communications Decency Act (CDA), passed by Congress in 1996.

A DOJ spokesman said officials there are disappointed that the court again struck down a law "intended to protect our children." The DOJ is reviewing its options before deciding what to do next with COPA, he said.

The Center for Democracy and Technology, an online rights advocacy group, praised the 3rd Circuit's decision.

"Throughout the history of legal challenges to COPA, we have argued that the most effective way to protect children online, and the means least restrictive of free expression, is to give families the resources to control what their children see and do online," CDT General Counsel John Morris said in a statement. "This empowers parents, respects the First Amendment and acknowledges the diverse sensibilities of American families."

Hackers have released software that exploits a recently disclosed flaw in the Domain Name System (DNS) software used to route messages between computers on the Internet.

The attack code was released Wednesday by developers of the Metasploit hacking toolkit.

Internet security experts warn that this code may give criminals a way to launch virtually undetectable phishing attacks against Internet users whose service providers have not installed the latest DNS server patches.

Attackers could also use the code to silently redirect users to fake software update servers in order to install malicious software on their computers, said Zulfikar Ramizan, a technical director with security vendor Symantec. "What makes this whole thing really scary is that from an end-user perspective they may not notice anything," he said.

The bug was first disclosed by IOActive researcher Dan Kaminsky earlier this month, but technical details of the flaw were leaked onto the Internet earlier this week, making the Metasploit code possible. Kaminsky had worked for several months with major providers of DNS software such as Microsoft, Cisco and the Internet Systems Consortium (ISC) to develop a fix for the problem. The corporate users and Internet service providers who are the major users of DNS servers have had since July 8 to patch the flaw, but many have not yet installed the fix on all DNS servers.

The attack is a variation on what's known as a cache poisoning attack. It has to do with the way DNS clients and servers obtain information from other DNS servers on the Internet. When the DNS software does not know the numerical IP (Internet Protocol) address of a computer, it asks another DNS server for this information. With cache poisoning, the attacker tricks the DNS software into believing that legitimate domains, such as idg.com, map to malicious IP addresses.

In Kaminsky's attack a cache poisoning attempt also includes what is known as "Additional Resource Record" data. By adding this data, the attack becomes much more powerful, security experts say.

An attacker could launch such an attack against an ISP's (Internet Service Provider) domain name servers and then redirect them to malicious servers. By poisoning the domain name record for www.citibank.com, for example, the attackers could redirect the ISP's users to a malicious phishing server every time they tried to visit the banking site with their Web browser.

On Monday, security company Matasano accidentally posted details of the flaw on its Web site. Matasano quickly removed the post and apologized for its mistake, but it was too late. Details of the flaw soon spread around the Internet.

Although a software fix is now available for most users of DNS software, it can take time for these updates to work their way through the testing process and actually get installed on the network.

"Most people have not patched yet," said ISC President Paul Vixie in an e-mail interview earlier this week. "That's a gigantic problem for the world."

Metasploit's code looks "very real," and uses techniques that were not previously documented said Amit Klein, chief technology officer with Trusteer.

It will probably be used in attacks, he predicted. "Now that the exploit is out there, combined with the fact that not all DNS servers were upgraded... attackers should be able to poison the cache of some ISPs," he wrote in an e-mail interview. "The thing is-- we may never know about such attacks, if the attackers... work carefully and cover their tracks properly."

#### Congressman Wants Opt-In Rule for Web Tracking

The chairman of the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet said he thinks online monitoring services working on behalf of the advertising community should be required to obtain clear approval before tracking the online activities of individuals.

There are notable differences between the typical data gathering that individual Web sites conduct and those deploying deep-packet technologies in broadband networks, Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) noted during a hearing on the impact of deep-packet technologies on consumers, Internet service providers, and the Internet.

"First, there is a distinction in the detail, type and amount of data collected," Markey said. "As opposed to individual Web sites that know certain information about visitors to its Web sites and affiliates, deep-packet inspection technologies can indicate every Web site a user visits and much more about a person's Web use," he said.

Markey, whose subcommittee has direct jurisdiction over the Federal Communications Commission and providers of telecommunication services, noted that deep-packet technologies can be used not only to target advertising based on a user's Web habits, but also to manage traffic on a network, detect network threats, and discover the presence of copyrighted or illegal material.

"As a result, these technologies raise not only significant privacy concerns but also highlight broader policy questions, including how they impact the evolution of the Internet itself and its future prospects for driving innovation and fostering competition and job creation," Markey said.

During this month's hearing, Markey and other subcommittee members grilled NebuAd CEO Robert Dykes about his company's Web monitoring service. Though Dykes said his company's technology does not gather personal information about individuals and translates the IP addresses it gathers into anonymous identifiers, committee members expressed concern that the electronic profiling of any individual's online activities is an invasion of privacy.

In particular, Dykes did not support an opt-in program that would give online users a clear choice at the start. An across-the-board opt-in program, he said, would cause "major harm" to the Internet, which today receives more than 50 percent of its funding from advertising. "Our position is well-supported, that we operate within the law," Dykes later

told the Washington Post.

NebuAd currently requires that individuals opt out of its program if they do not want to be tracked. However, Markey said this approach amounts to presuming that "silence is consent" for NebuAd to do whatever it wants with the information it gathers.

"I don't think, unless you've got clear affirmative permission, that you should be able to take this incredible leap into the breaching of the privacy of Americans," Markey said during the hearing, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Markey also indicated he believes ISPs deploying deep-packet technologies must adopt clear privacy policies. "In my view, consumers deserve, at a minimum, clear, conspicuous, and constructive notice about what broadband provider's use of deep-packet inspection will be; meaningful, 'opt-in' consent for such use; and no monitoring or data interception of those consumers who do not grant consent for such use," he said.

#### Lexmark Announces New Inkjet All-in-Ones

Lexmark on Monday unveiled a number of all-in-one (AIO) inkjet printers, equally split between its Home and Student and Professional series. The X4950, X5650, and X6650 are the new personal printers, and the X4975, X6675 and X7675 are geared to small-office and home-office professionals.

Lexmark's Home and Student series consists of the X4950, X5650 and X6650 printers.

The Lexmark X4950 Wireless All-in-One is a three-in-one (print, scan, copy) device that features wireless connectivity, two-sided printing, a large 2.4-inch color LCD, an automatic document feeder (ADF), and print speeds of up to 30 pages per minute (ppm) black and 27 ppm color, according to Lexmark.

The Lexmark X5650 All-in-One features four-in-one capability (print, scan, copy, fax), a bright 2-inch OLED display, an ADF, Lexmark's quick-connect front laptop port, and speeds of up to 25 ppm black and 18 ppm color.

The Lexmark X6650 Wireless All-in-One features four-in-one capability (print, scan, copy, fax), wireless connectivity, a bright 2-inch OLED display, an ADF, and up to 25 ppm black and 18 ppm color.

The X4950, X5650, and X6650 have estimated street prices of \$150, \$100, and \$130, respectively.

Lexmark's Professional Series is designed specifically for small office/home office (SOHO) professionals and consists of the X4975, X6675 and X7675. Lexmark's Professional Series AIOs also feature high-yield cartridges and evercolor inks.

The Lexmark X4975 has three-in-one (print, scan, copy) capability, two-sided printing, a "vibrant" 2.4-inch color LCD, a 25-page ADF, and speeds up to 30 ppm black and 27 ppm color.

The Lexmark X6675 features four-in-one capability (print, scan, copy, fax), wireless, and print speeds of up to 25 ppm black and 18 ppm color.

The Lexmark X7675 features four-in-one capability (print, scan, copy, fax), wireless and Ethernet standards, two-sided printing, a 2.4-inch color LCD, a 25-page ADF, and up to 32 ppm black and 27 ppm color.

The X4975, X6675, and X7675 will sell at estimated street prices of \$180, \$150, and \$200, respectively. Each model features exemplary 5-year warranty coverage with lifetime priority phone support.

All six of the aforementioned AIOs will be available starting in September, with the exception of the X7675, which is available starting today exclusively at Staples.

### Yahoo's New Zimbra Desktop Puts All Your E-mail in Order

Yahoo is expanding its popular e-mail service to the desktop in a bid to help consumers manage their e-mail accounts when they aren't online.

At a conference for developers in Portland, Ore., Zimbra, a Yahoo company, is set to release a beta version of Yahoo Zimbra Desktop, an e-mail program that organizes Yahoo Mail, AOL, Google's Gmail and work and business e-mail accounts in one place - and lets you read, compose and organize messages off-line.

The program is a major addition to Yahoo Mail, now used by more than 250 million people. The free service can be accessed even when users are not logged onto the Internet and is "mashed up" to work with online applications. When viewing an e-mail, users can mouse over text to launch digital maps, currency conversion services and more.

Zimbra co-founder Satish Dharmaraj calls the gee-whiz features "Zimbra goodness." The 5-year-old company - named after a Talking Heads song - was started at a coffee shop in Palo Alto, Calif., on the premise that e-mail is broken. Yahoo plunked down \$350 million to acquire Zimbra in 2007.

Zimbra is the latest entrant in a field of e-mail programs - which include Microsoft Outlook and Mozilla Thunderbird - and a small group of e-mail-organizing services - such as ClearContext and Xobni. Zimbra is different because it combines both services while the user is off-line.

"E-mail overload and in-box inefficiency is running rampant," says Matt Cain, an analyst at Gartner. "This will popularize the notion of off-line e-mail."

Not only is e-mail volume up, but messages have evolved from simple notes to project-oriented tasks, says the non-profit Information Overload Research Group, a group of individuals from about 30 companies including IBM, Intel, Microsoft and Xerox.

E-mail management is a key part of Yahoo's strategy. At the giant Consumer Electronics Show in January, CEO Jerry Yang showed off a prototype version of Yahoo Mail that would transform it into an ^..ber communications tool. The newfangled mail software would tap into social networks, giving higher priority to messages from senders who are



friends, for instance.

The demo highlighted how Yahoo services could be overhauled to open them to the rest of the Web - a strategy successfully undertaken by Facebook and others.

The goal is to turn Yahoo into a primary online "starting point" for consumers, Yang said.

#### New York Says May Sue Comcast over Net Child Porn

New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, who has pressured Internet service providers to block access to child pornography, on Monday said his office would pursue legal action against Comcast Cable Communications LLC if it did not quickly agree to reforms.

Last month, major ISPs such as Verizon Communications, Sprint, Time Warner Inc's AOL unit, AT&T Inc and Time Warner Cable, agreed to block Internet bulletin boards and websites nationwide that disseminate child porn.

But the Comcast Corp unit did not sign New York's "code of conduct" that includes these and other business reforms, Cuomo wrote in a letter obtained by Reuters.

Comcast issued a statement saying it has been working with Cuomo and said it expects it will sign on to the New York code of conduct. The company also noted it signed a separate agreement with the cable industry and 48 state attorneys general to help combat child pornography.

Cuomo said the nation's No. 2 ISP "has continued to drag its heels when it comes to taking every necessary action to eliminate online child porn from the Internet."

As a result New York will pursue "legal action" - typically a lawsuit - if Comcast does not agree to change its business practices within five days, Cuomo said.

The attorney general said his office issued a subpoena to Comcast on May 6 related to the industry wide investigation and commenced talks "several weeks ago" to reach some agreement over how Comcast could "fight against child pornography."

#### Colorado 'Spam King' Walks Away From Prison Camp

Convicted penny-stock spammer Eddie Davidson walked away from a federal minimum-security prison camp in Colorado on Sunday, the U.S. Department of Justice said Tuesday.

Davidson, 35, had been serving 21 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to criminal spam charges in December. He is now considered an escapee and is being pursued by U.S. marshals, with help from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and local police.

He earned millions of dollars between 2003 and 2006 by operating a spamming operation, called Power Promoters, out of his home. He would change the header information in his messages to make it appear as if they had come from legitimate companies such as AOL and then send them out to hundreds of thousands of addresses.

Davidson sent the messages on behalf of an unnamed Houston company, court filings state. He was asked to promote about 19 penny-stock companies, including one called Advanced Power Line Technologies in 2006 and 2007. He would earn fees based on the trading volume of the stocks he was promoting.

The business was lucrative: The Houston company paid Davidson about US\$1.4 million for his services, court documents state.

Between 2003 and 2006, when his primary source of income was spam, bank account deposits into Davidson's account totalled about \$3.5 million.

Davidson, of Bennett, Colorado, had been incarcerated at the Florence Federal Correctional Complex, about 45 miles south of Colorado Springs.

#### Colorado's Spam King Murders Family, Self

His name was Edward Davidson, but the world will remember him as the notorious "Spam King" who was convicted and sent to prison, only to escape, kill his wife and child, and then turn a gun on himself.

Colorado's "Spam King" drama came to its conclusion on Thursday when the bodies of Davidson, his wife and three-year-old daughter were discovered in an SUV parked in a farmhouse driveway in a rural area east of Denver.

"What a nightmare, and such a coward," said U.S. Attorney Troy Eid. "Davidson imposed the 'death penalty' on family members for his own crime."

On July 20, Davidson walked away from a federal prison camp in Florence, Colorado - a minimum-security facility that features dorm-style housing, a low staff-to-inmate ratio and a program-oriented work environment.

Davidson, who was sentenced to serve 21 months in federal prison for illegally sending spam e-mail messages, left the Florence prison complex in a car with his wife, who probably never suspected his escape would lead to her death.

Davidson drove the car to Lakewood, a Denver suburb, where he got a change of clothes and cash. He then left. Davidson was next seen with a fatal, self-inflicted gunshot wound. In addition to shooting his wife and child, Davidson shot a fourth person in the neck. A one-year-old boy was found unharmed.

On April 28, 2008, Davidson was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Marcia S. Krieger to serve just under two years in federal prison. Judge Krieger also ordered him to pay \$714,139 in restitution to the IRS. Davidson seemed amenable, having pled guilty before Judge Krieger on December 3, 2007.

As part of the restitution, Davidson had agreed to forfeit property he purchased, including gold coins, which were the ill-gotten proceeds of his offense. At the time of sentencing, Judge Krieger ordered Davidson to report to a facility designated by the Bureau of Prisons on May 27, 2008.

According to the facts contained in a plea agreement, from July 5, 2002, through April 15, 2007, Davidson conducted a business in Colorado using the name Power Promoters. The primary nature of Davidson's business was to offer promotional vehicles in the form of large volumes of unsolicited commercial electronic messages, or spam.

Davidson first provided services to companies that promoted watches, perfume and other items. However, beginning in the middle of 2005 through 2006, he sent spam on behalf of a Texas company to promote its stock. The company generated its income through selling stock (commonly referred to as "penny stock") on behalf of small companies on the public market.

Aided by several sub-spammers, Davidson sent hundreds of thousands of unsolicited e-mail messages to potential purchasers throughout the United States and the world, touting the penny stock as an excellent investment.

Davidson possessed hundreds of thousands of e-mail addresses, to which he and his sub-spammers would send the e-mail messages. The messages contained false header information, which concealed the actual sender from the recipient of the e-mail.

Davidson provided spammed messages for approximately 19 companies and operated his spamming activities from his personal residence in Bennett, Colorado, where he had a large network of computers and servers that facilitated his business.

#### Google Counts More Than 1 Trillion Unique Web URLs

In a discovery that would probably send the Dr. Evil character of the "Austin Powers" movies into cardiac arrest, Google recently detected more than a trillion unique URLs on the Web.

This milestone awed Google search engineers, who are seeing the Web growing by several billion individual pages every day, company officials wrote in a blog post Friday.

In addition to announcing this finding, Google took the opportunity to promote the scope and magnitude of its index.

"We don't index every one of those trillion pages - many of them are similar to each other, or represent auto-generated content... that isn't very useful to searchers. But we're proud to have the most comprehensive index of any search engine, and our goal always has been to index all the world's data," wrote Jesse Alpert and Nissan Hajaj, software engineers in Google's Web Search Infrastructure Team.

It had been a while since Google had made public pronouncements about the size of its index, a topic that routinely generated controversy and

counterclaims among the major search engine players years ago.

Those days of index-size envy ended when it became clear that most people rarely scan more than two pages of Web results. In other words, what matters is delivering 10 or 20 really relevant Web links, or, even better, a direct factual answer, because few people will wade through 5,000 results to find the desired information.

It will be interesting to see if this announcement from Google, posted on its main official blog, will trigger a round of reactions from rivals like Yahoo, Microsoft and Ask.com.

In the meantime, Google also disclosed interesting information about how and with what frequency it analyzes these links.

"Today, Google downloads the web continuously, collecting updated page information and re-processing the entire web-link graph several times per day. This graph of one trillion URLs is similar to a map made up of one trillion intersections. So multiple times every day, we do the computational equivalent of fully exploring every intersection of every road in the United States. Except it'd be a map about 50,000 times as big as the U.S., with 50,000 times as many roads and intersections," the officials wrote.

#### Security Check: Don't Give Away Data with Your Old PCs

You've read the headlines about PCs and laptops with sensitive information falling into the wrong hands - and the aftermath of the data breach.

Symantec recently conducted a study and discovered one root of the problem - PCs and laptops that aren't properly cleaned before they are donated or disposed of.

Symantec looked into the types of data being left behind on used computers donated to Goodwill. The firm recovered a wealth of confidential and/or sensitive business information from several computers, such as invoices, inventory lists, bank account records, a corporate organizational chart with name and titles, and even business e-mails.

Here's the rub: When files are deleted from a computer disk by the operating system, the content of the files is not erased. The operating system only deletes references to the files on the hard drive. The contents of these deleted files continue to be stored on the disk and can be easily restored with data-recovery utilities.

"If you want to maintain a secure IT environment and protect your company's digital assets, you need a system that properly disposes of computer assets," said Kevin Murray, director of product marketing at Symantec. "It's not just a matter of calling a computer-disposal firm or donating the computer to Goodwill. You need to find certified and tested solutions that completely wipe all data from the hardware device."

The very first step in properly disposing of a computer is to remove it from the network. Getting rid of active connections is the key, Murray said, because you want to make sure the computer stops drawing items

from the network and stop mapping to the network.

Next, be sure to make a copy of pertinent information. Before donating a computer, go over the information not already on a network. Often, employees save drafts of documents they are working on onto their desktop or their My Documents folder and put the final draft on the network drive.

Although each computer is typically linked to a network, these files are not accessible to others on the network. Those files need to be saved to another location in preparation to being removed from the company's assets. Once all the important files have been evaluated, run a virus scan and copy the necessary files onto the network or another disk.

Next, you want to wipe the hard drive clean. Before donating or disposing of your old computer, remove all confidential or sensitive files and folders and wipe the hard drive clean. This avoids risk and liability issues if old finance and accounting files, employee Social Security numbers, invoices, business e-mails, or other confidential data fell into the wrong hands.

"It's not as simple as just dragging stuff into the recycle bin, because that often does not actually delete the data and it can be recovered," Murray said. "You need an extra utility to delete it."

Once you've run a utility such as Norton Ghost, R-Wipe & Clean, or McAfee QuickClean, you need to inspect your work. Look over the hard drive to make sure there are no sensitive files left. Only then should you decide how to dispose of the machine. Skipping this step can lead to data leakage, often exposing a company's most sensitive information.

~~~~~

Atari Online News, Etc. is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: dpj@atarinews.org

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.